

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Tuesday 4th October 2016, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	Carrie Hart Rachel Hatcher James Polansky Jonathan Steward
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Lissie Steward, Richard Wingfield, Peter Hawley, Tony Butcher, Antoinette Solera, Lyn Higgs.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Bowen, Cllr. Brooks, Cllr. Simister & Cllr. Bulmer.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr. Steward (gardening contracts in the village).

3. Public forum Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council. With the permission of the Chairman, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise.

Lissie Steward & Peter Hawley both wanted to comment about the boundary wall that has been proposed by Tony Butcher. Their comments were deferred to item 7 on the agenda.

Antoinette Solera & Lyn Higgs were at the meeting to promote Action for Pangbourne Toilets. They are in the process of applying for it to become a Charitable Incorporated Institution. £1,750 has been raised thus far, with a minimum of £10,000 initially required. They asked for a donation from the Council & left pledge packs with the Clerk. APT is liaising directly with West Berkshire Council as Pangbourne Parish Council are unable to support this initiative & will also be talking to the Parish Councils of Purley, Tidmarsh & Sulham & Upper Basildon. The Parish Council will look at the information provided & hope to endorse the group at November’s meeting. Richard Wingfield will ensure that the information is also added to the Whitchurch website.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 6th September 2016

Leslie Prater had asked the Clerk to clarify that he would be very happy to take residents of Manor Road to the Art Cafe on a Saturday morning once a month. The Minutes were then approved as a true record.

5. District councillor’s report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. County councillor’s report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present.

7. Planning

P16/S3062/DIS, The Haven, Eastfield Lane. No action was required as this deals only with a discharge of planning conditions.

P16/S3106/HH, Elm Cottage, Hartslock Bridleway. Removal of existing barn & replacement. The link to this on the planning portal was unavailable. The Clerk will liaise with SODC as the councillors would like to visit the site before making a decision.

Tony Butcher of 4 Whitchurch House was at the meeting to present the options he has investigated regarding the brick & flint wall he proposes to build along his boundary, where there is currently a wall with a fence on top. Beech & yew trees on the boundary have broken the wall. He has looked at 3 options. 1. Purchase a 2m-wide strip of verge from the Parish Council & build the new wall there, thus avoiding the trees; 2. Build the wall with a few curves in it to go around the trees (extend 50 cms twice, therefore purchasing several shorter strips of land from the Council); 3. Not purchase any land from the Council & rebuild the wall on its current location. Cllr Hart suggested 2 further options that could be explored : build a wall within the current wall to avoid the trees or use spot rather than trench foundations to avoid disturbing the trees' roots. Lissie Steward presented the views of various Manor Road residents, including herself, saying that the new wall was a good idea but that it should stay in its current location. Were it to be moved out on to the verge there would be no room for escape, should a vehicle mount the pavement. The verge has also always been a wild area in which children can play & she felt it would be better staying that way. Peter Hawley spoke about the area's history & heritage. He was in favour of maintaining the current alignment of the wall to maintain its unity with & proportions within the area & with the wall on the right. He & his wife (by email) felt that the Parish Council has a responsibility to protect its land for the future & selling this land could set a dangerous precedent, as well as encouraging cars to park there. The Council voted & the majority resolved not to sell this land (Cllr. Hart abstained from the vote as she had no strong views either way). The Council asked Mr Butcher to come up with an innovative approach to his plans.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Invoice from Steward Gardening Services for September village maintenance (£250.00)

Invoice from BDO LLP for external audit services (£240.00)

Invoice from NSALG for annual rental of the allotments (£393.40)

Invoice from the Environment Agency for frontage fee (£55.51).

The Clerk mentioned that she will soon be receiving an invoice for the first part of funding needed to subsidise the 143 bus service.

The Clerk had circulated the accounts to date (April-September) to the Council before the meeting.

The annual return has been audited with only a minor issue arising. The Clerk will look into this. The Council therefore approved & accepted the 2015/16 annual return.

The majority of councillors voted in favour of using the Old Stables for their meetings again in 2017 (Cllr. Steward voted to return to the village hall).

The Clerk's first payrise was unanimously approved by the Council & will take effect from next month.

9. Village green

No update.

10. TAPAG

Cllr. Polansky formally resigned from the Council. The Council thanked him for all his hard work & commitment, particularly with TAPAG, & wished him & his family all the very best for their move. The Clerk will begin the process of recruiting a new councillor.

Cllr Polansky will hand over all TAPAG information to Cllr Hatcher, who will be the new Council TAPAG representative.

The new crossing at the toll booth is nearly complete.

11. Village environment/maintenance

A charter has been written for the establishment of MOWS. Some minor amendments are required regarding the purchasing & approval process. The Clerk will carry these out & liaise with Lesley, returning the charter to the Council for its final approval.

The Council voted unanimously that the account at Collins will not be reopened in the interests of transparency & most efficient use of public money. Purchases can still be made there but it should no longer be the Council's exclusive retailer.

Following a very helpful email from a local resident the Council decided that no further dog-waste bins are needed in the village.

The Clerk will continue to investigate the provision of a large Grundon-style bin on the village green.

No action is required for what seems to be badger damage along The Cut.

WoTHabs will be presenting their application for a TOE2 grant application to the Council later this year.

12. Village/Neighbourhood Plans

Cllr. Hart will give all the information she gathered from the open days to Cllr. Donahue. Cllr. Donahue is taking over the Neighbourhood Plan planning area from Cllr Hatcher, although they will continue to work together regarding planning. Cllr Hatcher will instead concentrate more on traffic issues & TAPAG.

Cllr Donahue will be discussing Sonning Common's Neighbourhood Development Plan with them. He will set up a working group which will include planning, The Greyhound, local amenities etc. Cllr Steward would like to see The Greyhound become more involved in the community, perhaps as a village shop?

13. Maternity leave of absence

Cllr. Hart requested a 6-month leave of absence from the Council & indicated that this would be her last meeting before the baby arrives. She will, however, continue to be involved in all Council matters by email. The Council wished her all the very best & voted unanimously to grant her this leave of absence.

14. Council policies

The Council discussed these briefly. Cllr Donahue has emailed some comments on these, which the Clerk will incorporate in to the policies before bringing them back to the Council for final approval.

15. Other matters for Chairman & PC to consider Items that arise that are not on this agenda but need discussion & to be proposed for a future agenda

A resident has very kindly offered the Clerk a printer/scanner. The Council agreed to pay for any supplies the Clerk might need should she choose to accept this offer.

CLlr Steward stated that he is still investigating the possibility of holding a farmers' market in the village.

16. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 1st November 2016 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....